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Assessing the impact of open and distance learning (odl) in enhancing the status of women in Lagos State

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Abstract

This paper assessed the impact of open and distance learning (ODL) in enhancing the status of women in Lagos state, Nigeria. Using a survey research method, data were gathered through a structured and an open ended questionnaire from both single and dual mode institutions (NOUN and UNILAG respectively) in Lagos state. A total of two (200) hundred female students were randomly sampled out the population. The chi-square analysis was done at a 0.05 level of significance. Both the quantitative and qualitative results show that ODL significantly enhanced the status of women in Lagos state. Women also face different types of challenges on the ODL programme which inhibit them from enjoying the programme to the fullest. It is therefore recommended that women who did not have formal educational background should be encouraged to enrol for ODL programmes so that they can compete with their women counterparts who had formal educational background; challenges faced by women on ODL programmes should be straightly addressed so that more women could be encouraged to participate in the programme.

Keywords: open and distance learning, women status, national Open University {NOUN} dual mode, single mode, education.

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1.Introduction

Historically, women have occupied a very significant proportion of the human society. Nigerian census figure according to the Federal Government of Nigeria reveals that the women folk constitute over forty percent (40%) of the nation's population (Haruna, 2011). This figure reveals that the country cannot experience any meaningful development without the support of the women folk. Education is regarded all over the world as a basic tool for empowering, enhancing the status of women and bringing them into the main path of development. Education not only provides basic knowledge and skills for the women but it empowers women to take rightful place in society and development process, (FRN, 2004) since education is an instrument for national development. It is often said that if you train a man you train an individual but if you train a women you train a nation. Therefore women education serves as a fundamental human right and a developmental necessity.

Women empowerment is the development of mental and physical capacity, power or skills in women for them to operate meaningfully in their social milieu, thereby experiencing a more favourable level of social recognition and subsequently enhance their economic status.

The year 2002 UNICEF report stated that gender disaggregated data on education has revealed that compared to their male counterparts, women have, for the most part, attained only low levels of formal education. Despite its free education policy at all levels of schooling, access to education for all remained unattainable, more so for girls and women in some states in Nigeria like Sokoto and Zamfara, the female literacy rate is as low as 12 percent when compared to 59% for boys. The statistics indicated a wider gender disparity with 65.5% of male being literate as against 39.5% literate females. The following reasons as stated by Satayanarayana and Emmanuel (2009) are some of the reasons for educational backwardness of women in developing countries.

- General indifferences to the education of girls
- Social resistance arising out of fears and misconceptions that education might alienate girls from traditions and social values and lead to maladjustment, conflicts and non-conformism
- Early marriage and social inhibitions against girls pursuing education after marriage
- Prevalence of child labour among girls belonging to weaker sections and hard domestic chores which some of the unmarried girls are required to perform
- Prevailing notions that sole occupation of women is to bear children, look after her husband and children, and thus be restricted to domestic work
- Discrimination against women's labour in both organized and unorganized sectors in matters of recruitment, training and promotion
- Many girls and their parents find that school's curriculum does not conform adequately to their needs and interests
- Unsuitable and inflexible social timing and inadequate facilities for girls in schools particularly in co-educational schools

Egunjobi (2005) still contributing to the above assertions opined that women economic empowerment is low in Nigeria compared to their male counterparts. She said many women still live on menial jobs, most jobs they perform do not have economic values and all activities that does not require financial reward are mostly done by women. Akomolafe (2008) also opined that women have been politically enhanced by education. They are gradually occupying their rightful positions and awareness is being created that women should participate in partisan politics. Women have therefore been occupying various positions such as Ministerial positions, Senate, House of Representatives, State house of Assembly, Deputy Governors, and Commissioners etc. She stated further that women economic empowerment is too low in Nigeria. This is owing to the fact that resources which are of great importance in the life of women for the purpose of meeting their domestic and matrimonial commitment are inadequate and not available in most cases.

At the tertiary level, it is also obvious that the Nigerian traditional universities in totality cannot provide access to the number of applicants who intend to acquire university education in Nigeria. The fact still remains that the challenge of mass access to university education in Nigeria would continue to increase by the day as long as the higher education learning is tied only to admission into the four walls of the conventional universities, be it government or privately owned. Currently only 20 percent of Nigerian secondary school leavers have access to places at University in Nigeria, leaving many thousands without the chance to continue their education(Okebukola,

2008). Nevertheless, Nigeria has long been in search for appropriate measures of expanding its education programmes to meet its population growth and the increasing demand for tertiary education. Various efforts include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1981 UN convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 World Forum on Education for All, especially the EFA 2015 goal. As one of the intervention to widen access to education, equality of basic educational opportunities as well as providing a second chance for women and girls who had never been or had once been in the system but had to dropout for one reason or the other. Also in line with its commitment to achieving gender equality in education by 2015 such that both males and females are assured full and equal access to good quality basic education, government is collaborating with stakeholders to promote programmes and activities towards elimination of gender gaps in education. Notable is the FGN/UNICEF/DFID Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria. The strategy aims at 15% reduction in disparities (especially gender), through an inter-sectoral response and enhanced linkages between programmes and directly addresses EFA (Okebukola, 2008). Another strategy government has laid down to bridge the gender gap is the promotion of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) which is the basis of this research. The goal of ODL as stated in Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education shall be to provide access to quality education and equity in educational opportunities for those who otherwise would have been denied.

Women perform triple roles - reproductive, productive and societal/communal responsibilities. They are perceived by society as managers of home and child minders. Their biological make up make them responsible for carrying babies during pregnancy. Mothers who are not fortunate to have responsible husbands are left with the sole responsibility of ensuring the total upbringing of their children which gives them extra financial responsibilities. The socio-cultural and biological roles affect their ability to leave home management and child care responsibilities for school. Working mothers who dare to pursue academic laurels are effaced with the challenging task of combining work, home/child care and studies. These factors point to the need for alternative modes of delivery of education that will meet the lifestyle of all women. With ODL women who have been deprived formal education because of one reason or the other to have benefited immensely. An empirical example can be found in the number of women who have been empowered through completion of one programme or the other. Records from distance learning institute of the University of Lagos, Nigeria indicates that of the major programmes offered by the institute as at 2001, 2874 students offering administration degrees were women while 164 of the women offered science degrees. According to Baikie et al (2005) the National Teacher's Institute which trains teachers in order to improve the quality of nation's teaching force records that with the number of students enrolled for the NCE were 93,000 out of which 68,000 were women. For the Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate diploma programmes, the students enrolled were 8000 out of which 5000 were women; the pivotal Teacher Training Programme (PTTP) which was last offered in 2003 had an enrolment of 29,000 and 21,000 were women (NTI Kaduna, 2000); and the grade two teachers' certificate (TCII) programme designed for teachers who do not possess the TC II had an enrolment of 103,000 students and of which 77,250 were women. Also at the National Open University of Nigeria, a single mode university which started her open distance learning academic activities in 2004 and have records of those who have completed a post- graduate diploma programmes in various disciplines amounting to 2,341 while those who have completed masters degree programmes were numbered to be 4,182. Amongst these graduated women, 5,034 of them were full time housewives from different religious backgrounds including Islam, Christianity and other traditional religion (Temitayo, 2012).

With these figures, it is obvious that women inspite of their condition could access education and get empowered through ODL since this mode of education allows them to learn from home as house wives and study for a programme of their choice without neglecting their marriages and also enables them to contribute to the development of their various localities.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the impact of open and distance learning in enhancing the status of women in Lagos State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Assess the extent to which ODL has enhanced the status of women in different programme of study Lagos State?
2. Determine the challenges women face on the ODL programme.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does ODL enhance the status of women in different programme of study in Lagos State?
2. Do women face challenges on the ODL programmes in Lagos State?
- 3.

1.3 Hypotheses

Ho₁: ODL does not significantly enhance the status of women in different programme of study in Lagos State.

Ho₂: Women does not face any significant challenges on the ODL programme

1.4 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the academic, social, economic, and political status of women has been lagging behind for ages compared to their male counterparts. In order for women to meet up with their male counterparts, the Federal government of Nigeria has set up various open and distance learning programmes which can serve as a major vehicle to break the vectors- access, quality and cost that has constrained education in order to improve women's status, reduce their vulnerability and act as a starting point in their empowerment. As a result many women are studying on the ODL programme and hope to bag a certificate at the end of their programme. This paper therefore sought to find out whether the open and distance learning programme has helped increase on the status of women in Lagos State.

1.5 Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design.

Study Population and Sample

The study population of female students from single and dual mode institutions (NOUN and UNILAG distance learning centers respectively) was employed for the study. A total of two hundred (200) female students ranging from five schools (Sciences, Education, Arts and Social Sciences, Engineering and Law) were randomly sampled out of the population. The samples were selected in this order:

Institution	Sciences	Education	Engineering	Arts and social sciences	Law	Total
Victoria Island	20	28	10	25	07	90
NOUN	15	36	29	17	13	110
Total	35	64	39	42	20	200

Instrumentation

The instrument used was a structured and open-ended questionnaires designed by the researchers were given to colleagues in other departments for further face validation. They made corrections and modifications where necessary. The instrument has three sections (A, B and C) covering demographic information, impact of ODL in enhancing the status of women, and challenges women face on the ODL programme.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested by first administering them to twenty (20) students of NOUN. Then, the reliability coefficient of 0.81 was determined using Alpha Chronbach method.

Data Collection procedure

For easy collection of data from the two institutions, the questionnaires were given to the target students by the researchers and with the help of research assistants. The questionnaires were collected on the spot with minimal guidance since all the respondents are literate adults.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, cross-tabulation and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Chi-square analysis. The SPSS package version 20 was used for the

analysis.

1.6 Results

Based on the nature of the study, pertinent answers were given to some of the research questions and two hypotheses were tested using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather data for the study.

Table i: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	30-39	52	26.0
	40-49	98	49.0
	50-59	43	21.5
	60 and above	7	3.5
	Total	200	100
Programme of Study	Sciences	35	17.5
	Arts and Social sciences	42	21.0
	Engineering	39	19.5
	Education	64	32.0
	Law	20	10.0
		200	100
Type of Occupation	Teaching	64	32
	Health worker	63	31.5
	Banker	21	10.5
	Self Employed	30	15.0
	Others	22	11.0
200		100	

From the table above, the larger percentage of the respondents are between the age of 34-49 (49.0%) and 30-39 (26.0%) while the lowest percentage is between the age of 60 and above (3.5%). Also 35 (17.5%) of the respondents are science students, 42 (21.0%) are in the arts and social science department, 39(19.5%) are in the engineering department, 64 (32.20%) are in the education department while 20 (10.0%) are in department of Law. The larger percentage of the sampled population are also teachers 64 (32%) and health workers 63 (31.5%) while 21 (10.5%), 30 (15.0) and 22 (11.0%) are bankers, self-employed and others respectively. This means that majority of the women on the ODL programme are mostly teachers and health workers who want to increase the status through ODL.

Answering of Research Question : Does ODL enhance the status of women in different programme of study in Lagos State?

Table ii: A cross tabulation on women's status in different ODL programmes

		Science	Arts and social science	Engineering	Education	Law
Has ODL enhanced the local bodies	Strongly Disagree	0 (0.0%)	2 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)
	Agree	22 (23.4%)	21 (22.3%)	7 (7.4%)	35 (37.2%)	9 (9.6%)
	Strongly Agree	13 (13.1%)	19 (19.2%)	32 (32.3%)	24 (24.2%)	11 11.1%)
	Agree	35 (17.5%)	42 (21.0%)	39 (19.5%)	64 (32.0%)	20 (10.0)
	Total					
Have you gained confidence in dealing with family	Disagree	0 (0.0%)	5 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Strongly Disagree	4 (28.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (35.7%)	5 (35.7%)
	Strongly Agree	11 (19.3%)	8 (14.0%)	30 (52.6%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (0.0%)
	Agree	20 (16.1%)	29 (23.4%)	9 (9.6%)	15 (12.1%)	51 (12.1%)
	Agree	35 (17.5%)	42 (21.0%)	39 (19.5%)	20 (32.0%)	64 (10.0%)
	Total					

I have achieved higher educational qualifications that increased social esteem	Disagree Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 20 (23.8%) 15 (15.8%) 35 (17.5%)	4 (100%) 7 (41.2%) 25 (29.8%) 6 (6.3%) 42 (21.0%)	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 7 (8.3%) 32 (33.7%) 39 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%) 5 (29.4%) 28 (33.3%) 31 (32.6%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 5 (29.4%) 4 (4.8%) 11 (11.6%) 20 (10.0%)
It serves as second chance for the earlier dropout and the disadvantaged	Disagree Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree Agree Total	8 (42.1%) 0 (0.0%) 13 (19.1%) 14 (16.9%) 35 (17.9%)	2 (10.5%) 9 (34.6%) 8 (11.8%) 23 (27.7%) 42 (21.4%)	7 (36.8%) 4 (15.4%) 14 (20.6%) 14 (16.9%) 39 (19.9%)	0 (0.0%) 13 (50.0%) 19 (27.9%) 28 (33.7%) 60 (30.6%)	2 (10.5%) 0 (0.0%) 14 (20.6%) 4 (4.8%) 20 (10.2%)
It facilitates the acquisition of variety of knowledge through the print and the non-print media	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 18 (17.1%) 17 (22.4%) 35 (17.5%)	0 (0.0%) 9 (69.2%) 12 (11.4%) 21 (27.6%) 42 (21.0%)	6 (100%) 0 (0.0%) 18 (17.1%) 15 (19.7%) 39 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 41 (39.0%) 23 (30.3%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 4 (30.8%) 16 (15.2%) 0 (0.0%) 20 (10.0%)
Enhanced access to legal literacy and information relating to women's right and entitlement in society so as to participate as an equal footing in all areas	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 4 (18.2%) 8 (11.4%) 23 (26.7%) 35 (17.5%)	11 (50.0%) 5 (22.7%) 4 (5.7%) 22 (25.6%) 42 (21.0%)	2 (9.1%) 5 (22.7%) 19 (27.1%) 13 (15.1%) 39 (19.5%)	9 (40.9%) 4 (18.2%) 25 (35.7%) 26 (30.2%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 4 (18.2%) 14 (20.0%) 2 (2.3%) 20 (10.0%)
I am able to develop ability to think critically	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	23 (74.2%) 4 (19.0%) 6 (8.6%) 2 (2.6%) 35 (17.5%)	4 (12.9%) 4 (19.0%) 21 (30.0%) 13 (16.7%) 42 (21.0%)	0 (0.0%) 5 (23.8%) 15 (21.4%) 19 (24.4%) 39 (19.5%)	4 (12.9%) 4 (19.0%) 17 (24.3%) 19 (50.0%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 4 (19.0%) 11 (15.7%) 5 (6.4%) 20 (10.0%)
It changes socialization process	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	15 (57.7%) 2 (10.0%) 4 (4.7%) 14 (21.2%) 36 (17.5%)	4 (15.4%) 9 (45.0%) 7 (81.0%) 20 (30.3%) 40 (21.0%)	5 (19.2%) 5 (25.0%) 23 (26.0%) 6 (6.1%) 39 (19.5%)	2 (7.7%) 0 (0.0%) 36 (41.9%) 26 (39.4%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 4 (20.0%) 16 (18.6%) 0 (0.0%) 20 (10.0%)
I gained better respect in the family and community	Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 18 (40.0%) 17 (13.1%) 35 (17.5%)	11 (44.0%) 8 (17.8%) 23 (17.7%) 42 (21.0%)	2 (8.0%) 0 (0.0%) 37 (28.5%) 39 (19.5%)	8 (32.0%) 14 (31.1%) 42 (32.3%) 64 (32.0%)	4 (16.0%) 5 (11.1%) 11 (8.5%) 20 (10.0%)
I acquired better communication skills	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 2 (10.5%) 17 (16.5%) 16 (23.5%) 35 (17.5%)	4 (50.0%) 9 (47.4%) 12 (11.7%) 17 (25.0%) 42 (21.0%)	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 37 (35.9%) 2 (2.9%) 39 (19.5%)	4 (50.0%) 8 (42.1%) 23 (22.3%) 29 (42.6%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 0 (0.0%) 14 (13.6%) 4 (5.9%) 18 (10.0%)
Changed the political, social, and economics and cultural perception of the society about women	Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Total	0 (0.0%) 4 (12.0%) 18 (31.0%) 13 (13.0%) 35 (17.5%)	4 (44.0%) 0 (0.0%) 15 (25.9%) 23 (23.0%) 42 (21.0%)	5 (55.0%) 9 (27.3%) 7 (12.1%) 18 (18.0%) 39 (19.5%)	0 (0.0%) 13 (39.4%) 14 (24.1%) 37 (37.0%) 64 (32.0%)	0 (0.0%) 7 (21.2%) 4 (6.9%) 9 (9.0%) 20 (10.0%)

Enhanced the means and method of empowering women	Disagree	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	Strongly Disagree	2 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (86.7%)	0 (0.0%)
	Agree	21 (25.3%)	23 (27.7%)	23 (27.7%)	14 (16.9%)	2 (2.4%)
	Strongly Agree	12 (12.4%)	19 (19.6%)	11 (11.3%)	37 (38.1%)	18 (18.6%)
	Total	35 (17.5%)	42 (21.0%)	39 (19.5%)	64 (32.0%)	20 (10.0%)

From the table 2 above, 55 (40.95%) science, 40 (41.5%) arts and social science, 39 (39.7%) engineering, 59 (61.4%) Education and 20 (20.7) law students agree that ODL enhanced the local bodies while 0 (0.0%) science, 2 (28.6%) arts and social science, 0 (0.0%) engineering, 5(71.4%) education and 0 (0.0%) disagree that ODL enhanced the local bodies. Also on whether they gained confidence in dealing with family, 31 (35.4%) science, 37 (37.4%) arts and social science, 39 (62.2%) engineering, 15 (12.1%) Education and 59 (12.1%) law students agree while 4 (28.6%) science, 5 (100%) arts and social science, 0 (0.0%) engineering, 5(35.7%) education and 5 (35.7%) disagree. On whether they have achieved higher educational qualifications that increased social esteem, 35 (39.6%) science, 31 (36.1%) arts and social science, 39 (53.2%) engineering, 59 (65.9%) Education and 15 (16.4%) law students agree, while 0 (0.0%) science, 11 (41.2%) arts and social science, 0 (0.0%) engineering, 5(29.4%) education and 5 (29.4%) disagree. 27 (36.0%) science, 31 (39.5%) arts and social science, 28 (37.5%) engineering, 47 (61.6%) Education and 18 (25.4%) law students agree, while 8 (42.1%) science, 11 (45.1%) arts and social science, 11 (52.2%) engineering, 13(50.0%) education and 2 (10.5%) disagree that ODL serves as second chance for the earlier dropout and the disadvantaged. It was also observed that 35 (39.5%) science, 33 (48.6%) arts and social science, 33 (36.8%) engineering, 64 (69.34%) Education and 16 (15.2%) law students agree that 0 (0.0%) science, 9 (69.2%) arts and social science, 6 (100%) engineering, 0(0.0%) education and 4 (30.8) disagree that ODL enhanced the local bodies. The larger percentage of the women across programmes also agree that ODL enhanced access to legal literacy and information relating to women's right and entitlement in society so as to participate as an equal footing in all areas, changes socialization process, enable them to gain better respect in the family and community, acquire better communication skills, changed the political, social, and economics and cultural perception of the society about women, enhanced the means and method of empowering women while 27 (93.3%) of the women in science department only disagree that ODL enable them to develop ability to think critically while other women in the other programmes agreed.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: ODL does not significantly enhance the status of women in different program of study in Lagos State.

Table iii: Pearson Chi-square analysis on the status of women in ODL across different programmes

Test Statistics												
	Has ODL enhanced local bodies	Have you gained confidence in dealing with family	I have achieved higher educational qualifications that increased social esteem	It serves as second chance for the earlier dropout and the disadvantaged	It facilitates the acquisition of variety of knowledge through the print and the non print media	It enhanced access to legal literacy and information relating to women's right	I am able to develop ability to think critically	It changes socialization process	I gained better respect in the family and community	I acquired better communication skills	Changed the political, social and economic and cultural perception of the society about women	Enhanced the means of method of empowering women
Chi-Square	28.226 ^a	93.509 ^a	63.743 ^a	43.669 ^a	73.440 ^a	49.286 ^a	103.766 ^a	87.255 ^a	43.146 ^a	58.572 ^a	39.311 ^a	73.739 ^a

df	8	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	8	12	12	12
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 43.0.

From table above, the result of the Pearson chi-square analysis shows that all the variables tested in the hypothesis are significant {,000} at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis is taken. Hence ODL significantly enhance the status of women in different program of study in Lagos State.

Hypothesis Two: Women does not face any significant challenges on the ODL programme

Table iv: Chi-square analysis on the challenges women face on the ODL programme

Test Statistics									
	Multiple responsibilit y at home and at work	Face to face preference	Feeling of anxiety	I have Technology phobia	I always feel overwhelm ed	Lack of electricity	Harassment from male lecturers	Poverty	There is support from family members
Chi-Square	153.721 ^a	135.023 ^a	139.302 ^a	117.814 ^a	65.628 ^a	59.209 ^a	82.233 ^a	101.907 ^a	75.116 ^a
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 43.0.

The above analysis reveals that the result of the chi-square analysis shows that all the variables tested in the hypothesis are significant {,000} at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis is taken. Hence women face significant challenges on the ODL programme in Lagos State.

1.7 Discussion of Findings

The study assessed the impact of ODL on the status of women in Lagos State. The results of the findings in hypothesis one reveal that the Pearson chi-square analysis reveals that ODL significantly enhance the status of women in different program of study in Lagos State. This is in support of Baikie et al (2005) and Temitayo (2012) agreed that women are studying in different ODL programmes in Lagos State and all over Nigeria at different levels. In support of the above result, one of our respondents {Mrs Fatoye Boluwatife}, said: *I am a working mother, ODL has indeed helped to reshape my communication skills and I also gained confidence in dealing with my family. My colleague now respects me more than before when I had no higher academic training.*

Another respondent said:

I am a teacher and have two kids; my proprietor has increased my salary ever since he knew that I am on the ODL programme, though I have only one semester to complete my programme. Apart from that I am being called to give my own contribution on some decisions that involves critical thinking. I am happy that even my boss recognizes and appreciates my contributions. I also have more money to take care of my family then before.

In hypothesis two the result shows that women face significant challenges on the ODL programme in Lagos State. This supports Emmanuel, Tijani and Aiyegbusi {2013} which opined that women are perceived by society as managers of home and child minders who are not fortunate to have responsible husbands are left with the sole responsibility of ensuring the total upbringing of their children which gives them extra financial responsibilities. She said further that the socio-cultural and biological roles affect their ability to leave home management and child care responsibilities for school. Working mothers who dare to pursue academic laurels are effaced with the

challenging task of combining work, home/child care and studies. Supporting the above result, one of our respondents {Akinbolade Motunrayo}, said: *I teach during the day and I had a three and five year old kid that I need to take care of. Unfortunately for me, I couldn't have time to study my books until ten thirty at night, and by the time I finish the household chores coupled with getting my children in bed and preparing some stuffs for the next day, I would have been tired and exhausted. My husband is not supportive and even the family members. I am left alone to do most of the jobs.*

Another respondent quipped "Most at times there is no light and most of our assignments are to be submitted on line. By the time I will finish for the day and resort back to my assignments at night, there will be total black out and the cost of buying fuel every time is too much for me".

1.8 Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, both the quantitative and qualitative result of this study shows that women statuses are enhanced by ODL programmes in different programmes. Majority of the women used for this study also agreed that ODL provide accessible education for them. The finding of this study is in support of earlier one Balkie (2005) and Temitayo (2012). This study suggests that ODL is a promising and practical strategy to address the challenge of widening access thus increasing the participation of women in higher education which will in the long run improve their status economically, socially, politically and culturally. Despite these benefits women face different challenges which did not make them to enjoy the programme to the fullest. Hence it is therefore recommended that women who did not have formal educational background should be encouraged to enrol for ODL programmes so that they can compete with their women counterparts whose status has been enhanced through ODL; challenges faced by women on ODL programmes should be straightly addressed so that more women could be encouraged to participate in the programme.

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